
Neighborhood Watch Newsletter

April 2006

City of Berwyn
Mayor Michael O'Connor



Berwyn Police Department
Chief William Kushner



"Beware of Dog"

COYOTES

Coyotes are becoming more common in the Berwyn area, especially around the train tracks. There is no need to be alarmed; there has not been one incident involving any type of coyote attack on humans. In fact, each year domesticated dogs are responsible for about 15,000 reported bites in Cook County and in the past six years dogs have been the reason for seven deaths. Research shows that in the past 30 years, there have been only 16 documented cases of a coyote attacking a human in the entire North American continent. Coyotes are scavengers by nature, but are also opportunistic hunters. Their basic diet is made up mostly of small game: rats, rabbits, opossum.

If a coyote is sighted DO NOT:

- Feed the coyote
- Leave garbage out
- Leave garbage container lids unsecured
- Leave out pet food and water
- Leave small pets outside for long periods of time unsupervised
- Run away (by running away, you may inadvertently provoke it to chase)

What to do if a coyote is encountered:

- Make loud noise or throw something to scare it
- Show the coyote who is the boss; coyotes need to be frightened by humans
- Be careful if the coyote is in fact attacking your pet; use a broom stick or other long stick/pipe to separate the animals to avoid being bitten yourself

Coyotes, by nature, are scared of humans. Do not give the animal a ground for feeding. Keep your property clean of garbage and places to nest down. If the coyote does interest you, you should observe from a safe distance and do not provoke it. Parents should inform their children that they should not approach any wild animal of any sort to prevent any incident. If an aggressive coyote is causing a disturbance, please dial **911**.

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Operation Identification:

What is Operation Identification?

Operation Identification (OP ID) is a nationwide effort of law enforcement agencies and the citizens and businesses they serve. The goal is to reduce property theft through an identification system.

Why is it important for me to participate in OPERATION ID?

Marking your possessions with an identifying number is an effective method of deterring theft. Thieves find it more difficult to dispose of stolen articles that can be traced through an owner's personal ID number. Marking items may also assist with the investigation and conviction of anyone in possession of those items illegally. The marked items can also be returned to the rightful owner.

How Can I Participate?

Engrave or mark your valuables with your Driver's License Number or State ID number. Example: Number and State Abbreviation. Be sure to mark all items of value and be complete in your inventory.

What Items Should I Engrave?

The best rule of thumb is to mark and record anything of value that a burglar (or two) could cart away. Here are just a few examples:

Bicycles, Power tools, Binoculars, Recreation equipment, Cameras, Televisions, Computers CD/DVD players, VCRs, Hand tools, Stereo systems, Video game equipment, Electronics Camcorders, Appliances, Business machines.

Where Can I Borrow An Engraver?

Electric engravers are available for checkout at City Hall. Please contact Director of Community Outreach, Jeanmarie Hajer, at 788-2660 ext. 290. Remember, there are many citizens waiting for you to return the engraver so they may use it. Be considerate, complete your marking and return the engraver within the loan agreement time.

The Scoop on Vandalism

Look around Berwyn. Do you see?

- Graffiti-covered walls?
- Spray-painted or destroyed mailboxes and garbage containers?
- Broken streetlights?
- Spray-painted street signs?
- Busted public telephones?
- Missing street and traffic signs?
- Writing or torn pages in library books?
- Broken fixtures, doors, and stalls in public restrooms?
- Shoe-polished cars?

Vandalism, the willful destruction or defacing of property, is a crime. It's expensive to repair. It makes our communities unattractive and unsafe. It isn't cool. Help send a clear message that teens don't tolerate vandalism!

Graffiti

From obscene and violent language scrawled on a public bathroom door to elaborate murals on a brick wall, graffiti appears in many forms. But it's all the same, if it's not on the artist's property, it is vandalism, and it is a crime. Graffiti is often the first sign that gangs are taking over a neighborhood. Gangs' "taggers" act as messengers for the gang, use graffiti to mark their turf, advertise their exploits, and challenge or threaten rival gangs. Graffiti gives criminals the impression that residents don't care about their neighborhood, and a neighborhood that doesn't care is an easy target for crime. Don't let this happen to your neighborhood! Take a stand against graffiti and make sure graffiti is removed as soon as it appears. It takes persistence, but by working with law enforcement and other residents, you can keep your neighborhood clean and the effects of vandalism to a minimum.

The Price We Pay

Schools pay millions of dollars each year to clean up graffiti, repair buildings, and replace vandalized equipment. That's money that could be used to buy better sports equipment or new computers.

- Local governments (and taxpayers: your parents, your neighbors, and even yourselves) pay the bills for broken streetlights, stolen signs, and vandalized parks. We pay higher taxes and services are cut to pay for damage caused by vandalism.
- Businesses pass on the costs of vandalism to customers through higher prices. Some businesses are forced to move to different neighborhoods, taking good shopping out of your community.

More Than Money

- People feel angry, hurt, and sometimes frightened when something of theirs, a mailbox, a bike or a car door, is destroyed for no reason.
- Vandalism claims other victims as well. A car crash because stop signs were stolen; someone in need of help can't dial 911 because the pay phone is broken; people get lost because street signs are missing or covered with graffiti.

Who Vandalizes and Why?

Some vandals work in groups. You may even know some of the teens doing the damage. There is no one "type" of teen who vandalizes. He or she might be the smartest kid in school, or the kid who is always in trouble. Most vandals are young people, from grade schoolers to teens to young adults — who vandalize because of:

- Boredom
- Anger
- Revenge
- Defiance
- Association with friends.

Take Action

- Take pride in your surroundings. Vandalism cheapens your area and you.
- Learn about the costs and effects of vandalism by working with law enforcement, school officials, and community leaders. Teach what you learn to other teenagers and younger children.
- Start a clean-up crew at your school or in your neighborhood. Ask local businesses to donate supplies like paint and paintbrushes

for covering graffiti, or tools and equipment for repairing vandalized property. Volunteer to help businesses and homeowners repair their property as soon as it is vandalized and paint over graffiti.

- Write articles for your school or community newspaper on the costs of vandalism and graffiti, their impact on school and other budgets for activities, and how the courts, juvenile and adult, treat vandals.
- Look for ways to use the talent and creativity of vandals in positive, nondestructive activities. Sponsor a mural contest at your school or a youth center. Encourage art supply stores and area businesses to provide large canvases and materials for kids to create murals inspired by themes like saying no to drugs, the importance of education, or celebrating diversity in your community. Ask local artists to attend and provide instruction and advice or judge a mural contest.

Work with your faith community to adopt a street or a park with your school, youth, or community group. Plant trees, bushes and flowers. Repair equipment and install trash containers. Organize a monthly outing to clean up garbage and keep an eye on things.

CURFEW

***A Reminder to all Parents and Young Adults:
The Berwyn Police Department will
enforce all Curfews, as well
Parental Responsibility Violations.***

Curfew for all Youth under the age of seventeen (17).

- Sunday through Thursday 10:30 pm.
- Friday and Saturday 11:30 pm.

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR KIDS ARE?

Crime Prevention is a Shared Responsibility. Report all Suspicious Activity to the Berwyn Police Dept.

Warning Signs That Your Child May Be Involved with a Gang

- Admits to “hanging out” with kids in gangs
- Shows an unusual interest in one or two particular colors of clothing or a particular logo
- Has an unusual interest in gangster-influenced music, videos, movies, or websites
- Uses unusual hand signals to communicate with friends
- Has specific drawings or gang symbols on school books, clothing, walls or tattoos
- Comes home with unexplained physical injuries (fight related)
- Has unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing or jewelry
- Carries a weapon
- Has been in trouble with the police
- Exhibits negative changes in behavior such as:
 1. Withdrawing from family
 2. Declining school attendance, performance, behavior
 3. Staying out late without reason
 4. Displaying an unusual desire for secrecy
 5. Exhibiting signs of drug abuse
 6. Breaking rules consistently
 7. Speaking gang style slang

What Parents Can Do to Prevent Gang Involvement

- Spend quality time with your child
- Get involved in your child’s school activity
- Be a positive role model and set the right example
- Know your child’s friends and their families
- Encourage good study habits
- Teach your child how to cope with peer pressure
- Help your child develop good conflict/resolution skills (See www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/conflict.asp)
- Encourage your child to participate in positive after school activities with adult supervision (recreation centers, organized sports, youth groups)
- Take action in your neighborhood (get involved in Neighborhood Watch, report and remove graffiti) **Graffiti Hotline #: 795-5628**

- Talk with your child about the dangers and consequences of gang involvement. Let your child know that you do not want to see him or her hurt or arrested. Explain to your child that he or she should **NOT**:
 1. Associate with gang members
 2. Attend parties or social events sponsored by gangs
 3. Use hand signs, symbols, language that is meaningful to gangs
 4. Wear clothing, including specific colors, which may have meaning to gangs in your area

City-Wide Neighborhood Watch Gang Awareness Seminar

May 17, 2006

7:00pm

Berwyn Police Dept. - 6401 W. 31st St.

Are you concerned about gang activity in Berwyn?
What are the warning signs parents should look for?

What to do if your child is in a gang.

Why do kids join gangs?

Learn the FACTS from the FICTION

Presented by:

Tactical Coordinator Sgt. Gerald Conoboy
Unit Commander Frank Cimaglia
& Special Guest Speakers

Ward Cleanups

2nd Ward – Sat/Sun – April 22 & 23

Please contact Alderman Ramos: 484-4275 for more information.

4th Ward – Sat/Sun – April 29 & 30

Please contact Alderman Skryd: 788-6934 for more information or to become a volunteer coordinator.

Ward Meetings

6th Ward- Alderman Michael Phelan

Monday, April 10th 7pm

North Berwyn Park District -1619 Wesley Avenue

3rd Ward- Alderman Mark Weiner

Saturday, April 29th 10am

Trinity Church - 26th & Riverside Drive

Interested in becoming a Neighborhood Watch Block Captain? Please contact Jeanmarie Hajer:
788-2660 ext. 290 or JHajer@ci.Berwyn.il.us